

ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF

COMMUNITY AMONGST

TEENAGERS IN A

MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

A Doctor of Ministry Project

Prepared by

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## Foreword

Those of us who have served as Site Team members for this Project have a great deal of invested interest and enthusiasm over its possible impact upon the military community. Though we have shared our feelings with Chaplain Hosutt, we requested that they might become a permanent part of this report. He graciously consented to letting us include our comments and impressions in this portion of the paper.

Chaplain (LTC) James R. Linderman. I am the Chaplain responsible for all of the religious activities at the Fort Wadsworth Post Chapel. When I was approached by Chaplain Hosutt about utilizing his work with the Youth of the Chapel as a project for his Doctor of Ministry degree. I was quite excited. I was even more pleased when he asked if I would serve on his Site Team. There were no road maps for this venture. Though about every facet of military life has been studied, strangely enough, very little has been done in regard to how our forced life style impacts upon the children. Nothing is available to chaplains to guide them in their attempts to give a feeling of security in a highly mobile society to young adults - teenagers who, as yet, have not been able to resolve the question concerning their own personal identity. We observe that the level of security and spiritual and personal growth rises when the "new kid on the block" is accepted by his peers and feels a part of the community. We also observe that youth groups grow and become more supportive of their members in proportion to the group's cohesiveness. But what causes this to happen? What can one do to make it happen? Chaplain Hosutt's search and possible answer to these questions is what gives importance to this endeavor and generates excitement in any chaplain who is attempting to conduct a meaningful religious program for the young people of a military community.

Chaplain (LTC) Ralph Fishburn. As a chaplain on active duty, I have been placed in assignments where one of the responsibilities has been to provide and carry on a program for youth. The enthusiasm of the youth for such a program has varied from year to year and from fort to fort. There has been nothing available to chaplains to help us to give them a feeling of importance or security in the type of society in which they live. I've wondered what has caused one group to be different from another group and what could be done to create a sense of cohesiveness and unity. The research that Chaplain Hosutt has carried on here among the young people of Fort Wadsworth has been very enlightening and will be very useful to me in my future assignments and to other chaplains who have been faced with the same problem. The information that he has come up with in his study will be very beneficial to us as we try to put together a meaningful program for the youth of the military community.

Holly Johnson. As an "Army Brat", I have experienced a change in friends almost every year. Every year, a new youth group is formed with new members and new leaders. Very few leaders have ever led such a group before and most have no idea of what is expected of them. Every year a group must try by hit and miss methods to find programs that will interest its members. Sometimes this method is successful, sometimes it is not. If some sort of resource material were available to new leaders, the group would have a much better chance of survival. It is my hope that Chaplain Hosutt's project will be just that.

## INTRODUCTION

A teenager was recently asked how the Christian Church could help the youth in our modern day society. The youngster replied:

The best thing the church could do for youth in their growing up is to give them a loving community and to give them support. Give youth a loving community that feeds them, aids them, and gives them things to think about - that's the primary role the church needs to play.

Young people today are seeking a meaningful Christian Community. Many want to engage in an honest exploration of the Christian message. They need to look at the world from the perspective of the Christian faith, in the spirit of realism and honesty.

Young people today want action and they want it now! They do not want to simply sit around and philosophize about world and local problems; they want to do something about them.

What does it mean to be a "fully human person"? What is involved in "finding and losing one's self"? Why do we expect a Christian to be a genuine person, not a phony? These are questions youth want to ask. They want to discuss marks of character and styles of life. They need to share their own experiences of alienation and rejection, forgiveness and reconciliation. They need to discuss their concerns and fears - fears that they are different, unpopular, not intelligent.

Their lagging self-confidence can be restored. Being part of a Christian Community, acquiring new and deep friendships, exploring interesting and challenging topics within their community are keys to a life of meaning and purpose.

I personally have served over fifteen years as an Army Chaplain. During this time I have worked directly with eleven different youth of the chapel groups. One of my great frustrations has been the absence of any type of written material directed toward the ministry to youth in their extremely transient military setting. This project is a direct attempt to remedy that problem.

The specific purpose of this project is to determine if and/or how a sense of community can be created amongst teenagers in a military chapel setting. I will attempt to define sense of community as I understand it and I will deal with how teenagers in our modern society cope with and approach new relationships. Detailed attention will be given to the topic of military mobility and how it impacts on youth in the military family. In order to uncover valuable lessons learned and insights gained for future youth ministry in the Army, I will research the ten stage history of the Fort Wadsworth, New York Youth of the Chapel during the period July 1975 - June 1976.

Once this project is completed, copies of it will be turned over to the Religious Education Project Manager of the United States Army Chaplain Board for evaluation and possible distribution to youth sponsors throughout the Army environment. In so doing I dedicate this endeavor to a particular group of teenagers - "Army brats" in Army Chapels throughout the world.

## A THEOLOGICAL BASE

God is for people; and people—if they are really to find fulfillment—are for God. In the biblical view, people, man and woman, are radically free. The story in the Bible is a story of liberation. The Jews are set free from Egyptian bondage. The Jews here symbolize all men and women. This liberation doesn't once-for-all set people free. The story of the Jewish experience in the promised land confirms the fact that people find themselves again and again bogged down in sin, in idolatry.

But God does not give up on people. He wants us to be free; he is eager to communicate his love for us. So he comes to visit us in Jesus Christ—in his life, death, and resurrection. God is patient; he doesn't give up on us. And he will not coerce us to respond to him, though he calls all of us.

God created a new community in Christ, and he calls all people to fulfill themselves in that community. The community is the Church—a body of people finding self-fulfillment through love. In the Church people can truly love; they can risk finding union with others without giving up their freedom and individuality or demanding that others give up the same.

Jesus' disciples, both in the first and in the twentieth century, have had difficulty giving themselves, risking themselves in their relationships to others. What we resist is limitation; the fact that if we are to love at all we must love particular, concrete persons and not everybody in general. But when we really feel loved by God—and we experience this love in community—we are free to love ourselves and to accept limitation

as a condition of our human existence. Again and again though, we must, through God's help, overcome our resistance to limitation.

We have still another struggle: living with ambiguity. Things have a way of not turning out the way we want them to or expect them to. Change is inevitable, and it is fortunate for us that reality is like that. For only through change can the "old man" die and the "new man" be resurrected. This is realism: that in every creativity there is destructivity. Life to be fulfilled, must be lived before death.

I now turn to one aspect of this theology and to a specific group of people as I strive to determine how to develop a sense of community amongst teenagers in an Army Chapel.



## I. The Meaning Of SENSE OF COMMUNITY

### As Understood by the Author

Much has been written about establishing a sense of community in groups, but my primary concern in this project centers on teenagers within the Army environment and how they come to experience a sense of community in groups. And my conviction is that nothing speaks louder or with more authenticity than a historical report such as this is. My ingredients include some forty teenagers, a group setting in an Army Chapel, and a larger Army environment, from which the teenagers came. I, too, should be included, for I functioned as the adult Sponsor/Chaplain in this historical setting.

My research shows we touched down in at least four basic stages or phases in our developing a sense of community in our YOC (Youth of the Chapel). Our first stage was the acquaintance or "presence" stage. How vividly I recall our first gathering at the Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, swimming pool, as we entered into the presence of one another. The young people were tall and short; fat and thin, and very self-conscious. Later discussions revealed what a "high risk" experience this first meeting was. It was a time of great ambivalence when many of our young people literally forced themselves to attend. They needed and wanted fellowship, but they were desperately afraid of rejection. Will I be accepted in the group or not? How will they like how I look and swim? What is that football player looking chaplain/sponsor like? These and a multitude of other questions were surfaced as "real life" issues during that first meeting and the early weeks of our YOC.

Very gradually, the group moved to a second stage. We had been in each others presence numerous times and were acquainted in that we could identify one another and carry on surface relationship. Now, by intentional design on the part of the sponsor and group officers, we moved into a new stage. This was a period when projects were selected in an effort to create enthusiasm, purpose, and meaning into the group. It was a period of planning and implementing bake sales to make money in anticipation of a week-end retreat. It was a time when small groups within the total group were finding ideas and activities in common. In a real sense, it was a time of group-breakdown as cliques were formed within the group. Certain teenagers found security in the presence of other teenagers, within the context of the total group. It was also a time when members of the group began to challenge the sponsor and elected leaders for their planning and programming. Because of the security some found in friendship with a few members of the group, these same group members were willing to question and judge others. Some of the YOC members never went beyond this particular stage. They reminded faithful to a small group of friends (a clique), but never genuinely sensed the community of the group that I feel eventually evolved.

In my estimation the first signs of a sense of community in the YOC surfaced during our first group evaluation in early December. As the group dealt with its brief history and attempted to assess its strength and weaknesses, its members identified themselves as members of "our" group. Having a "history" meant that they had common experiences, stories, problems, in-jokes, etc. In the process of identifying how to improve the

group life. many group members experienced a sense of belonging and worth. Some group members expressed their feeling and were open to hearing other opinions as they were expressed. As this occurred, I believe group growth also took place. This represented our stage three.

Towards the end of our year together and following our January retreat, I sensed a dimension of trust in our group that had not existed earlier. Some of our teenagers, in community with the rest of the group, seemed freed-up to express themselves and be themselves. For these youngsters the risk level had lowered and the trust level had increased. Within the group there was a greater recognition of the contributions of certain members. The level of shared interests, ideas and reactions increased, and stronger group identity emerged as members of the group became more willing to accept one another as they were and to support one another in functions as well as worship.

As I reflect on this summary of what actually did happen to our YOC this past year, I am encouraged to find that in some instances, at least, we approached what I believe to be the model of Christian Community. Members of the Church must be helped to grow as Christians if they are to share in the Church's faith and commitment and find ways of expressing it appropriate to their time. I believe this ongoing process takes place through relationship with the Christian Community expressed in a variety of forms and situations. The Guidelines for Evaluating Christian Education in the Local Church prepared by the New Forms Work Group Division of Christian Education, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries

suggests Christian Community involve persons in at least the following fundamental growth activities:

1. Growing in relationship to God, self, other persons, the world of nature, culture, and society.
  2. Experiencing the reality of the community of faith through participation in the life of the church.
  3. Appropriating the Christian tradition and heritage.
  4. Developing a Christian world view, that is, a Christian perspective for forming, choosing, or expressing values at whatever age.
  5. Making life decisions and taking action in the light of a Christian world view.
  6. Continuing to learn by interpreting personal experience and current happenings from a developing Christian perspective.
  7. Enlarging appreciation of the wider world through experiencing the world's pain and need and the richness that its diversity can offer us.
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As this paper develops I hope to life out examples from our YOC group that illustrate how these fundamental growth activities were experienced.

The local congregation is meant to be a fellowship of committed Christians — a community of faith. It is a body of interrelated, interdependent, and interfunctioning parts within the larger whole. In turn these communities of faith are part of the world-wide community of believers, often called the Church Universal. I am firmly convinced that the Army congregation within the military environment is very much a part of a community of faith and the Church Universal. In Christian tradition, the community of

faith, wherever found, is part of the Body of Christ,

I also believe that persons of all ages should be enabled to share in as much of the total life of the church as is appropriate for them. And this, of course, is what our YOC was all about as it functioned out of the Fort Wadsworth Post Chapel (a community of faith) and as a part of the Church Universal and the Body of Christ.

There is an ideal Christian fellowship that our group, as a part of a community of faith, sought after - at least we talked about it on several occasions. It is the experience of koinonia, that fellowship, that sense of community binding Christians together which far exceeds any routine sense of "groupness". Our Christian Biblical faith instructs us that God's eternal purpose for men and women is to be a part of His fellowship. It is a fellowship of persons united in the love of God, persons who become "one body", free but not individualistic.

D.M. Baillie talks of lonely, isolated and selfish people, but he goes beyond this topic and adds the following:

But God has never given mankind up. He has always had His purpose. And (so far as we can venture to describe the divine plan in human history) His method of saving mankind has been like this. Thousand of years ago He started a new community, a little one at first, in order that it might be the nucleus of a new mankind...they would find their own salvation in being used for the salvation of mankind. Thus they would be a redeemed and redeeming community, through which all the world would be drawn back out of its disintegration into the life of community with God and man, and so the nucleus would grow into a new mankind,

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The community of Israel, the first community of faith to respond to God, failed. It was only as God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself

creating the "Community of the Cross" that His divine plan for having mankind continued to work.

And it is the Church, the spirited Israel, the Body of Christ, made into a new community through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit which carried on the work of reconciliation.

In what way is this related to our YOC? Let me attempt to make the connection. It is my conviction that groups carried on within the framework of the Christian Church, whether in the church building itself, or in the houses of the members, can justify their existence only in so far as they share in the church's work of fulfilling God's eternal purpose for mankind.

Change of personality and life style occurs as teenagers meet God, who in His grace seeks them in their lostness and aloneness. Indeed, drawing them to Him, away from their self-love and inadequacies. God enables them to become "a new creation". It is only through the supporting power of that quality of life provided by the Christian group that this change can take place. As young people change, they move toward Christian maturity.

Those who experience this new relationship with God and with one another, this sense of being made whole, feel an inner compulsion to help others discover in their own lives the power of God's redemptive love. Because they have been "freed-up" themselves, they can accept new ideas, meet hostilities, and care for unlovely people. Their capacity to trust is greatly increased and their awareness of sense of community with others is expanded.

It has been suggested that where missionaries can find no point of contact between systems of thought, there is a point of contact between

people; thus it is only in personal community, not in the mind of one individual, that the breach between different groups can be crossed as Christians and non-Christians learn to hold together in personal groups of love and sympathy and patience.

The thought that kept me ever excited and motivated about our YOC group is that Christianity is a knowledge that makes a difference in people and to people where they live. As our teenagers learned together, as they studied that which seemed important to them, and as they helped one another through their fellowship together, they sustained one another and experienced change and growth. As they moved to an awareness and understanding of a sense of community and fellowship - koinonia, I felt they were experiencing first hand the true sense of community that can and often does bind Christians together.

## II HOW TEENAGERS IN OUR MODERN SOCIETY COPE WITH AND APPROACH RELATIONSHIPS

In the first chapter I have been discussing the Christian sense of community that teenagers so desperately need to experience and participate in. Such a sense of community does not suddenly appear out of nowhere but has to grow and develop. This growth and development takes place as teenagers relate with other teenagers in the group of which they are a part. And a critical influence on how they relate with their peers is how they have and are relating to the adults around about them; i.e. their parents, teachers, clergy etc. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the modern teenager, within and outside of the military environment, approaches relationships with others. Such a discussion will aid us in eventually evaluating the Fort Wadsworth YOC to determine whether or not a sense of community was established or/and individual growth took place in the lives of its members.

Teenagers are in the process of learning. They may use different words or unusual behavior, but they ask: What do I want to do with my life? Who am I really? How do I decide what's right and what's wrong? Whom can I trust? Is there a God or some sort of implied presence from which I can get direction? Who shapes my life - me, my parents, my friends, my environment? How can I get along better with my parents? How can I be liked by others? What do I do when I'm lonely? What in the world needs changing? All of these are basically life-shaping, religious questions - reaching for the ultimate.



The church is the one institution that should most naturally respond to these questions and the needs of the growing people - the process of becoming. If the church is living what its Master taught, it should be a source for answers to ultimate questions. It should be a community of acceptance, and it should have its share of ideal citizens to whom youth can turn for support.

Herman Ahrens, Jr., writing in AD Magazine, gives us a good synopsis of today's youth and how they approach relationships:

"Although teenagers may seem silent compared to recent years, today's youth want to be heard. They definitely have something to say, but they tune out when the listener smothers two way communication. They know more at an earlier age, but their involvement in adult society is often postponed to the point of disenfranchisement. They have ideals but they seek practical ways to live out these ideals. They are ready for action, but not in the streets. They have fun, often "just for the fun of it".

They look for models they can respect, but they see through play, plastic leaders. They want desperately to do what's right, but who's their advocate when, by making a mistake, they learn the right? They cry for help, although there's not always someone near who cares. They want to be accepted as human beings."

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To understand how the modern teenagers approach relationship with others we first need to have a grasp of what is happening to the teenagers during this time in his or her life, for adolescence is more a matter of change than of age. Physically the adolescent changes from child to an adult. The growth spurt is the second most rapid in life - second only to that of the first year. An adolescent at the peak of his or her growth period may grow up to four inches in a year. A few of our YOC members literally did that this past year. And the body changes are even more

radical than in the fast-growing infant. Breasts develop, voices change, hair grows on the body, body proportions change, and genitalia begin to mature. These changes, so variable, can affect the adolescent's emotions, behavior, and outlook on life.

The teenager goes from a situation of complete dependence (during childhood) to one of independence. He or she must learn to think for him or herself, to form judgments, and to take more and more responsibility - while accepting, at the same time, continuing dependence on his or her parents and the rules they lay down. He or she must learn an adult sexual role (manliness or womanliness), determine identity with a group, and function as an individual within a group. All this must be done during a period of rapid change, with the limited experiences of childhood, the family environment, and the prejudices of the preceding generation as guides.

Small wonder, then, that we adults and YOC sponsors see swings of mood in adolescents - childish behavior following what seemed to be mature behavior in the space of a week, or even an hour meeting - rebelliousness, shyness, showing off, indecision, determination, ups and downs. Behavior that would be abnormal at any other stage in growth may be normal during this period. And parents, pastors, and counselors may have difficulty in differentiating between problems of "normal" adjustments and maladjustments. Also, in lives of rapid social changes - changes in mores, liberalization of religion, sexual freedom, political struggles, and an identification and adjustment after-this becomes even more difficult. No wonder more than a third of our YOC very honestly responded in an early

discussion we had in October 1975 on "Who I Am" that they normally felt confusion, insecurity, alienation a sense of unfulfillment, a feeling of being trapped. Some used less formal wording and suggested that they were screwed up, a lonely soul, being smothered by society, a freak.

Much of the baggage that teenagers bring to a youth group comes directly out of their previous relationship with their parents. Parents have given their children standards of behavior and inherited characteristics - and they have been responsible for their children's environment, health, and well-being in the formative years of childhood. And, while each member of a family is an individual, it is now at adolescence, that the individual most actively works toward independence. He or she must begin to be responsible for his own behavior, think about his future, from judgements and attitudes of his or her own which will shape his or her adult behavior. But maturity does not come overnight - I have mentioned the mood swings, the uneven emotional development that is characteristic of teenagers. And growing people, in their relationship to their parents, are still more or less dependent for food, clothing, shelter, education and health care, as well as emotional and spiritual nourishment.

These changed roles and attitudes, and the ease with which the family adjusts to them, are tremendously influenced, of course, by the family relationship during the childhood years. In some families, problems that lay dormant may erupt during the emotionally changeable period of adolescence. But even the soundest family finds some difficulty in adjusting to the new roles, to the radical changes in the children and to the need to accept new standards of behavior.

In discussion with my YOC members over how teenagers approached relationship with a group, they were both realistic and idealistic at one and the same time. Consensus was that it was hard to trust others until they really got to know them. Those who were free to talk about this suggested that their own insecurity and concern over being rejected was behind the lack of trust toward new people. They were afraid others would not like the way they looked, what they wore, or how they said things. A greater number from the group were willing to talk about some ideal standard for relationship. They included doing your own thing, being honest, being responsible, getting involved, openness to new experiences and getting close. To do your own thing in relationship to others is to be free to build one's own philosophy, ideas, life style and culture. At this point teenagers seem to be suggesting that the greatest of crimes is to be alienated from oneself and that the individual should be glad to be him or herself regardless of what others think. Honesty in our modern day, is idolized by teenagers. Personal relationships are keynoted by honesty - by "telling it like it is" and by relating to others on the basis of knowing them as "open". Ideally, evasive relations between people are wholly unacceptable. This philosophy overthrows notions of prestige, rank, social distance and prejudices based on color of skin, economics, religions, cultural and national heritages. Part of the result of this honesty is that teenagers do not have automatic respect for persons who are older or of higher social or institutional status than themselves. While loyalty is needed, the modern teenager is suspicious of obligation and contracted relationships between people. Honesty replaces both laws, promises, vows, or notions of duty.

Teenagers see themselves as personally involved in life and personally responsible for what happens in society. They see themselves as potential change agents and desire to change society for the better by means of their personal commitment. Thus they want to be a part of deciding those issues which affect them. Moreover, they realize freely their responsibility for such things as pollution, war, poverty, and the like. If I understand them clearly, their commitment to change is for the welfare of individuals rather than for improvement or reform of the established structures in society.

Today's teenagers emphasize their openness to and interest in new experiences. Since they are in a state of learning and experience which opens up new vistas of knowledge or expands their repertoire of emotions, feelings and sensitive responses to others is looked forward to and cherished. This openness and desire for greater sensitivity is revealed in the intensity and emotional impact of youth culture music, use of drugs, sexual practices, as well as with patterns of interpersonal relationships to include clothing, hair styles and teen language.

Finally, they seek intimacy. Teenagers yearn for intimacy. They need to draw close to the world and to one another. They are accepting and want to be accepted. They seek new friendships and are vitally interested in team work - in getting along with others. They are both afraid of and curious about the opposite sex and spiritual relationship with God and their neighbor.

Obviously, this discussion has not been all inclusive. It has highlighted many of the things I have learned the past year reference how the modern teenagers approaches relationships. Final conclusions for this project may or may not verify some of the idealistic standards that members of my YOC group have shared with me.

### III MILITARY MOBILITY AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTH IN THE MILITARY FAMILY

Much has been written of the "Changing times" in which we live - resulting from technological advances, scientific discoveries and inventions, and change in mode of living. One of the most important changes has been the increase in mobility of population. It has been stated that we are a "nation on the move."

From the early days of the first colonies, through the period of the "opening of the West," Americans have been on the move, seeking new opportunities, new frontiers. However, in recent years - particularly since World War II - as our industrial society has become more highly organized and as transportation facilities have increased, we have witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of families moving from one place to another.

Among the reasons why families move, two major ones stand. First, there is the age old desire to better oneself. It may be that the father seeks a better job with a higher salary, perhaps a larger home, a better neighborhood in which the children can grow up. It is usually a personal choice. Secondly, there are increasing numbers of families who move because of some change in a parents' occupation. It is known that this increasing mobility includes people from all walks of life - from the executive and the professional person to the skilled and unskilled laborer. In the Army setting it includes the General, the Military Chaplain of all ranks, the young Private, and all of their dependent children, if they have them.

Of tremendous concern to me as an Army Chaplain and father is the fact that thousands of "military brats" are annually uprooted from known neighbor-

hoods, schools and communities to unknown ones. How these moves are made and to what extent the children are taken into consideration in planning often make a great difference in the way they will adjust or fail to adjust. We need to know a good deal more about what this means to children, its effect on their psychological, social and spiritual development. Many of us Army Chaplains do know from inquiry and observation that a large percentage of our child population is changing homes, schools and neighborhoods; that for many of these children adjustments are difficult and changes add greatly to "normal problems" of personal, spiritual and social growth and development.

Part of my own "sense of calling" to the Youth Ministry at Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, has been out of concern over the damage done in the lives of our extremely mobile families in the Army. Indeed, this concern was central in my selection of the research topic that I now find myself developing. What is the unique experience of the teenagers in the military family and community? How do they express themselves regarding their mobile life style? What do their parents have to say about the experiences?

Over thirty percent of all teenagers living in the Army environment throughout the world change schools and communities every year, normally in the summer. Some of these youngsters are moving for the third time in their lives, others for the fourth, fifth, or sixth. Some of these young people will make a fairly easy adjustment to their new schools and communities. Others will make the adjustment to change with considerable difficulty. Still others, for various reasons, will be greatly hurt, temporarily or even permanently.



In an attempt to see the problem through the eyes of the teenagers, parents, and chaplains, a number of each were consulted from the Fort Wadsworth community, all of whom had had experience with the Army and its mobile life style. However, it should be made clear that this was not a study. The talks were informal and at times almost incidental. Nevertheless, I feel what came out of them is highly revealing and significant.

Teenagers were consulted both individually and in groups. They were asked how they felt about moving and about starting up in a new community and saying goodbye to an old one. (The teenagers' comments and mine were expressed in past, present and future tenses, but as a matter of convenience I will report what was said chiefly in the present tense.)

There were a few youth who expressed apathy and indifference. "Oh, all Army Posts are alike." There were a few who expressed pleasure or satisfaction in moving as indicated by such comments as these: "I like adventuring." "I'll be glad to get away from this place." "Mom doesn't like the Post." "Where I'm going in Germany I'll only be two blocks from the school." "Nothing could be worse than the Big Apple and Staten Island."

But the majority of teenagers approached revealed concerns, worries, fears or resentments. The following comments made by members of our YOC at Fort Wadsworth are typical and tell their own story:

"I worry about my school work. I'm afraid I can't do it."  
"I don't want everyone eyeing me because I'm the new guy?"  
"Maybe no one will like me. I'm not very pretty."  
"I'll probably get lost in Germany. I don't speak the language."  
"I won't even know anybody's name."  
"I'm afraid my clothes won't be right at Fort Hood."  
"I probably won't fit into their YOC."  
"When I was new in my last school I thought the walls were coming in on me."  
"I wish my father had to go to school and then we wouldn't have to move all the time."

Worries about the future were mixed with regrets about leaving: "I wish Mark could go with us." "It will be different there," "I like the room in my house and don't want any other one." "I'm just getting to know you guys and now I've got to go." "I trust this YOC but I won't be able to trust the new one for a long time."

Some youth expressed many concerns or worries; others only one or two. The concerns most frequently expressed by the teenagers had to do with fear of failure in school work, fear of failure to make friends, and fear of being different.

I talked with a number of fathers and mothers, all of whom either were about to move or had moved one or more times in the past with their own teenagers. I asked what if any were the advantages of change either to their children or to themselves; what the disadvantages or difficulties were; what the lasting effects might be; and what suggestions or recommendations they could give to other parents who contemplated change.

In the majority of cases parents saw little or no advantage in change for their teenagers. Most felt that it was not good for teenagers to be uprooted and transplanted during their teens. Only a few were glad to get them out of a bad situation. All were uncertain as to the lasting affects. To some it seemed to be "just one of those things that had to be done" and little or nothing could be done about it. Others felt that much could be done and expressed concern that they hadn't done more. Many made specific suggestions as to what might be done to prevent some of the trouble.

One father said in effect:

We have got to stop expecting so much of children. I think a change of schools for a child is like a change of jobs for me - only more difficult.

An adult has years of experience in adjusting to major changes. He can use his past to help him predict what may happen and to help him prepare for it, but a teenager has a short past with fewer experiences. He has to fall back on his feelings, undisciplined and unreliable as they are, and on his wits, untrained and unpredictable. It is my opinion that many young people, with only their ingenuity to guide them, have been called upon to make adjustments far beyond their years.

One of the mothers with somewhat the same idea said:

Let me give you my hindsight. I see now what I didn't see in advance. When Lis changed schools she must have felt abandoned in an unknown world. The new school was huge compared to the one she left in Germany. She only knew a handful of Fort Wadsworth kids. The kids at New Dorp were different in social and racial background. And Oh, brother, was the place different in methods, textbooks, program, discipline, expectations! I say it's cruel to a fourteen year old, a job like that with no look ahead and no follow-up.

Other parents felt that they were so absorbed in feeling sorry for themselves that they probably made the going much harder for their youth. Typical remarks were: "We had to move from the country (Fort Riley, Kansas) to the city (Fort Wadsworth, New York) and we hated everything about it." "We expected to suffocate in an apartment house dwelling after a nine room house with a big yard." "How could I leave all my people and not be upset and upset the whole family." These self-critical parents agreed that they were the ones who needed help rather than, or in addition to, their child.

One mother said (and others expressed the same idea in other ways):

"Because we moved about so much when I was a child my education was snippity and I think I suffered from its polka-dot pattern during all my high school

years and perhaps even now." Another with the same feeling, said: "We moved four times during my elementary years. I saw no pattern, no plan to my education. I think I was always bewildered." This group of parents regretted the lack of continuity when a child goes from one Army Post to another and one school to another.

It needs to be added at this point that in the last three to four years throughout the Army, more wives and children have chosen to remain in one location and allow the husband/father to do the moving around by himself. Statistics are not available on this but it is obvious to me that more working wives and the Woman's Liberation Movement have joined to contribute to this increasing phenomenon.

This background material now brings me to the very essence of my project - the detailed examination of the Fort Wadsworth Youth of the chapel during the July 1975 through June 1976. It is my assumption that this group of teenagers, dependents of career military men and women, is representative of teenage dependents of Army personnel world-wide. It is with great enthusiasm that I launch off into the exploration in the hope that any insights gained/lessons learned, resulting from this project can be shared with other chaplains and lay persons in their ministries to our teenagers living in the Army environment.

#### IV. Ten Stages Out of the History of the Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, New York YOC

It is my conviction that nothing speaks louder or with more authenticity than the real life historical report of the subject matter being considered. In this project, I am considering the question of how a sense of community can be established amongst teenagers in an Army Chapel (church) setting, within a predominantly military environment. My research was accomplished in an actual military environment (Ft Wadsworth, SI, New York), at an Army Chapel (Fort Wadsworth Post Chapel) with approximately forty alive, dynamic, dependent military teenagers. In an attempt to focus this research, as well as to continue to demonstrate my familiarity with biblical, theological and historical resources, I have broken out my research into ten (10) stages of historical experience that the youth and I shared over a one year period. My goal, of course, is to discuss some insights gained and lessons learned from this project that I will be able to translate into firm recommendations leading to an answer to the question of how teenagers can experience a sense of community in an Army Chapel within a predominantly military environment.

##### STAGE I - THE CALL

June & July 1975

I remember years ago, as a seminarian, I used to read Luther, Barth, J.S. Whale, John Wesley and a multitude of others on the Doctrine of Calling. Now I thrilled at the thought that I would be a channel to my neighbor, open upwards to heaven by faith and outward to the neighbor through love. I was deeply moved to read that all the Christian possessess has been received from God that he may pass it on. I came to believe that our neighbor represented the invisible Christ so that, as we have done it unto

one of the least of brethren, we shall have done it unto him. My calling became for me the normal context for the exercise of my Christian faith; my calling was the God-given means whereby I would strive to serve and edify my neighbor in love. But the great obstacle that confronted me beyond this theological understanding that I had about calling, was the question of how I would know I had been called in a particular situation. Is there a voice that booms out at you or a person who confronts you? Does a passage of scripture speak gently to you in the quiet of meditation or is it the experience of "knowing" that goes beyond the academic realm and persuades your whole being? How will I know when to say "yes" to the invitation to step forward and love my neighbor?

Answers do not come easy to the questions listed above. I suspect we all have our own story or stories about how God's call has come to us. The story of my calling to the ministry of the YOC at Fort Wadsworth begins in early June of 1975. I had just graduated from the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and, at the recommendation of the officials at the US Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Wadsworth, New York, I had flown to Fort Wadsworth ahead of my family to arrange for housing. The very first day I was there I was contacted by the Army Chaplain who was functioning as the local Pastor to those of us who were assigned as instructors and course developers at the School and Center. Following a cordial greeting the Pastor/Chaplain announced to the assembled group that I was to be the Youth Director for the Post the ensuing year. This came as a shock, surprise and challenging thought. My family had not yet arrived. I knew absolutely nothing of my duty assignment, and we had no home to move into. Still, the

thought was challenging. From my seminary days right up through my recent ministry at West Point, New York, I had ranked high on my priority list the ministry to youth. Why? Because I had been blessed with certain qualities of personality and certain physical attributes that provided me with a certain degree of effectiveness in that ministry. Also, I had found it to be a neglected area of ministry in practically every community I had lived in. Before I knew it the Pastor/Chaplain was gone from my sight, but his pronouncement was still ringing in my ear, "Chuck Hosutt is this years Youth Director". His words rang back in my ears. Was this a call from God for me to love my new teenage neighbors at Fort Wadsworth? The remainder of that day I hurried through my schedule of activities and by the next afternoon I was flying back to northern Illinois to rejoin the rest of my family for a two week vacation. It would be July before we moved into our new home at Fort Wadsworth.

Our vacation time zoomed by and before I knew it we were occupying our new home at Fort Wadsworth. Suddenly, out of nowhere, teenagers approached me and asked when YOC would begin. They had heard I was to be their sponsor. Within twenty-four hours of our arrival that optimistic, over-zealous Pastor/Chaplain at Fort Wadsworth drove by and shouting out loud and clear, "Hi, Youth Director". Surely his voice wasn't God's voice and yet ----- why was I so attracted to the thought of this opportunity for ministry?

Two weeks quickly passed and many things began to fall in place. I would be researching and writing rather than preaching and counseling in my new assignment. Large numbers of teenagers were irritating parents in the weeks just before the start of school and absolutely no one had volunteered to

minister to the youth on Post. Rumors persisted that I had volunteered but I denied them and suggested in a humorous manner that our Pastor/Chaplain had been dreaming dreams and seeing visions. Finally, I was compelled to test the Pastor/Chaplain's idol threats. I went to his home and asked for the details. Much to my surprise, and on a one to one basis, he was not the aggressive, all assuming man I thought he would be. With a true Pastor's heart he shared with me his perceived need for a youth ministry and how he felt I might help. Suddenly his word sounded more and more like the words I had been exposed to way back in seminary and I knew a genuine CALL had reached me. The next Sunday afternoon I was ministering in the capacity of YOC Youth Sponsor of the Fort Wadsworth, Post Chapel.

STAGE II - HI STRANGER!

August 1975

Our first few sessions of YOC were painful and uneventful. The whole process of entering into the new community and a new YOC was obviously an uncomfortable experience for my new teenage friends as well as for myself. Later in the group life of the YOC the members said that saying hello, entering into a new group, was a frightening experience. When I asked how they had felt in those first weeks they responded in the following way:

Shy and Timid  
Out of place  
Scared  
Uncertain and awkward  
Dumb  
Too tall and skinny  
Too short and fat

On the surface of things it was difficult to recall a demonstration of all of these negative feelings. Some of the youth had been shy and withdrawn but



many others had been loud and active. How symbolic of the ambivalence youth experience during their teen years. In the following paragraphs I will lift out some of the dynamics that I feel affected how our YOC members responded to one another in those early weeks of relating to one another.

The teenager is a person like the rest of us, struggling to know himself/herself and discover his/her purposes. Living in a world of swift change, the modern day teenager must negotiate problems his/her parents did not have to face in their youth. In the modern living, youth are outgrowing old authorities and searching for new guides for conduct. Their changed and intensified life brings a curious mingling of rebellion, loneliness and the herd instinct. New sexual feelings and the new kinds of uneasiness are stirring within. The desire to impress and please may come at the age of greatest clumsiness, both physical and psychological. This is the age for argument with parent over the car, dating, money, hours out. This is the period when family and church often fail persons. It is also a period of opportunities.

Teenagers want more freedoms than they have had in earlier years. Nearly always they want to do more than parents are ready to permit. Yet, they may at unexpected times become frightened of freedom and look for security. They have mixed feelings about the responsibilities that go with freedom. If parents do not appreciate these facts, they make the problem more difficult. Even if they understand, conflicts are inevitable.

The peer group makes trouble, too. The youth yearns for acceptance by the gang. To be left out is extremely painful. Yet, the teenager is enough of an

individualist to have problems with the gang. Bitter struggles between conformity and integrity are common. Awareness of the opposite sex is both exhilarating and disturbing. The youth faces temptations, often without understanding his/her impulses or the reasons why he/she is expected to restrain them.

Self understanding is difficult at this period because the self is changing so fast. In his/her imagination, the youth may identify with many kinds of heroes. He/she tries out several personalities to see which one fits, which he/she really wants to be. Shall the young men be athlete, lady's man, scholar, gang leader, life of the party, the devil-may-care rebel, the kind who gets ahead in the world, the person others can trust? Several, if not all, of these have an attraction. The teenager may see ways to combine some of these roles. But not all of them. He/she must make choices.

This period of adolescence is more a matter of change than of age. Physically the adolescent changes from a child to an adult. Emotionally he or she is struggling with independence from parents (while frequently wishing he or she could go back to childhood dependence). Physical and emotional maturity brings new relationship with the opposite sex. These new relationships may be painfully self-conscious, or free and joyful. Intellectually, adolescents are approaching the peak of their ability to probe, to acquire new knowledge, to sift and sort ideas, to take stands upon their beliefs.

With all of these dynamics involved in the lives of each of the YOC members its no wonder that our first few sessions were painful and somewhat uncomfortable. They had entered into each others presence but it was as if they were still strangers to one another - mere acquaintances.

The early weeks and months of YOC were "clumsy" times as I recall them. The youth insisted on early elections of officers so as to give direction to their group. As the sponsor, I had decided to allow them substantial freedom. However, when the elections were held most members demonstrated ambivalence about taking leadership roles. To be nominated for office was exciting and reassuring but to lose an election was most humiliating. Several serious members declined nomination while the group "clowns" accepted one nomination after another. My better judgment told me to hold off on early elections for this particular group; but I gave in to their pleas for "democratic action". I would learn to regret my decision.

The newly elected officers started off with great enthusiasm, primarily because they did not have a grasp of their responsibilities. Our President, a buxom young sophomore in high school, who was rarely without words as a member of the group, could scarcely speak when her test of leadership came. Her three favorite boy friends shouted her down and before the evening was over she was in tears. She learned quickly that leadership is a lonely task. Other officers failed to come to her support as they had promised in the security of my living room at our officers meeting just a few nights before, and suddenly disorder reigned. Disorder quickly led to discouragement and after the first few meetings which resulted in little to no participation from the group, the officers were ready to resign. Why do these stupid boys giggle when we pray? Where are their Christian interests? Why did they refuse to participate in discussions? HELP. Chaplain Hosutt! Please help us with the leadership of our group!

Here we were just a few weeks into the year and the officers elect were begging for help. At our next meeting of the officers we discussed several of the dynamics involved. We talked about how difficult it is to step before a group of peers and give a word of instruction and/or guidance. We discussed the common need that exists amongst teenagers for attention and self focus. Officers should not be surprised if members try to outshout them and gain attention by not responding to instruction. At one point we got very theological and discussed sin and the experience of isolation that results from sin. In YOC, as individuals insisted on their own way, they were being very selfish, very sinful. Without regard for how their actions impacted on others, some individuals were very disruptive, discourteous, and inconsiderate. Such action caused irritation between members of the group and caused barriers to be erected between YOC members. The irritation spread and different members of the group became isolated from one another. Rather than experiencing a sense of community our YOC became a fragmented series of little groups, each group "bad mouthing" the other groups in a very judgemental, unloving manner. Truly our YOC was off to a very slow beginning.

A small segment of our YOC urged the total group to be more "spiritual". They suggested that some Bible study and more prayer would surely bring the group to its senses. Shortly after this recommendation was presented the officers turned a meeting over to those who requested more spiritual content. Much to the frustration of our evangelical members, the response was typically the same.

At the next officers' meeting we talked about the lack of community in our group and came up with the conclusion that we needed to do some goal setting for the group. We would plan a retreat away from Fort Wadsworth

and, as a group, we would work together to defray our expenses. One group worked on locating a retreat center. A second group planned bake sales and a "slave day". Purpose and a sense of sharing suddenly became new dimensions of experiences for some of us in YOC. Finally, after several frustrating weeks, our level of involvement as a group increased. Following a slow, tedious beginning our YOC was finally demonstrating at least some degree of cohesiveness as we planned and worked toward our off-post retreat in January. Why even the boys listened to our young, inexperienced President when she announced the plans for our up-coming retreat.

#### STAGE IV - MY EVALUATION

November 1975

About the same time that I began working with the YOC as their sponsor, I also began a Doctor of Ministry Program at New York Theological Seminary. Very early in the Doctor of Ministry Program, I was urged by my mentor to develop some type of survey that would evaluate my present ongoing ministry. My first impulse was to resist the evaluation. After all, I was a seasoned veteran in the Military Chaplaincy. At least to some degree, I had proven myself as an effective and successful pastor, preacher, and manager of personnel. I had an adequate sense of my strengths and weaknesses in ministry. Why then, the survey?

After further exploration of the function of the survey, I suddenly realized that it might be valuable if I developed a survey within the context of the YOC. I would allow the Post Chaplain, two fellow sponsors and the five key youth officers to evaluate me and my ministry as it related to my involvement in the YOC. Despite my uneasiness about allowing the youth to honestly look at Church Hosutt as a person and as a chaplain, I also must

confess to an element of excitement and curiosity about the experience. I would get some genuine feedback regarding my leadership style and would be able to compare how I was being perceived with how I thought I was functioning. Secondly, the evaluators would share their feelings with me about my effectiveness as a chaplain to include my quality of ministry, and commitment to Christ and my fellow man. Finally, the evaluation would obviously result in the surfacing of insights and creative ideas that would eventually improve the YOC. Although it appeared to be a risk, I suddenly realized it was a risk well worth the taking and I developed the survey that appears as Enclosure No. 1 in this project.

Before I share with you the results of the survey, I would first like to discuss the style of leadership that I intentionally developed with the YOC and why I chose that particular style. My previous experience in youth ministry, coupled with all I had read on the subject, confirmed in my mind that teenagers desire the opportunity to function in leadership roles. Following years of experience I had personally become convinced that too many adults are guilty of underestimating the abilities of teenagers, their creativity, insights and leadership abilities. I was determined not to make that same mistake. I would function as a resource person for the YOC, and if necessary, as a catalyst for the officer group at their planning meetings. However, I had every intention of allowing the YOC leaders to take the lead in their programming, planning and implementation of all of their weekly meetings. I would be on "stand-by" as it were as a resource person.

One other dynamic was very evident to me. Our young people were at all stages of spiritual development and their individual homes represented a myriad of theological persuasions. A small segment of the group was extremely evangelistic toward the remainder of the group and emphasized the need for our YOC to be a "witnessing" group. As the sponsor of the group, they expected me to set the example in witnessing. When they discovered that that was not my style of leadership, they expressed a certain amount of disappointment. Two of the officers who prepared the evaluation on me fit this category and throughout the survey they expressed great concern over my inability to truly share my "inner and spirited life". These preliminary comments are not in self defense but to help me clarify for myself what my insights were about my own style of leadership before the survey was taken.

The survey I used breaks out into three areas: 1. Chuck as a person 2. Chuck as a leader, and 3. Chuck as an enabler of change. The consensus of the group making out the survey was that I was a down-to-earth, approachable listener, who accepted people for what they were. In most instances, two of the youth, the two who desired me to be a stronger witness, were not totally prepared to buy in on this description. When it came time to rate my spiritual integrity, they rated me only average at the point where I shared my inner personal and spiritual concerns. As I examined the response I concluded that, outside the pulpit, my witness has emphasized a "doing of ministry" rather than a verbalizing of it. Even in my ministry with youth I have emphasized an example setting style of witness. Therefore, I was prepared to accept the critique which suggested that I was not as strong as I could be in sharing my inner personal and spiritual concerns. For me, it was a

matter of style based on conviction, and I had always hoped that in the long run "action" would win out over "words". When it came time for them to list my greatest strengths of personality I was not surprised when they came up with such items as "friendly", "outgoing", "sense of humor", "open and available". I was a bit bothered, however, to see that they excluded such terms as "caring" and "loving". Are these elements in my ministry or not? I continue to wrestle with this question.

The groups described me as a democratic leader who allowed decision making to be shared. I felt good about these results because they described the leadership style I had intentionally adopted. In the area of conflict, they suggested that I encouraged creative use of conflict for growth and normally functioned as a mediator in conflict situations. I truly felt good about this evaluation because we had our share of conflict, and I was concerned about how I was perceived in this role. The bulk of our conflict did move into a growth experience for the group but at the time of the conflict one is never certain of the results. I often discussed with the YOC the reality of conflict in life and the importance of working through it in a positive manner.

Finally, the survey takers suggested that I encourage changes that respond to needs and that I was more open to change than was the rest of the YOC. If change is required due to identified needs then I do feel it is legitimate. I was gratified in this area of the survey to see where the group affirmed my ability to cooperate with others in the YOC program. However, it was frustrating to read where six out of the eight members filling out the survey did not have a sense of clearly defined goals and objectives for



the group. As I look back on it I recall our officers dealing with goals and objectives in great detail early in our group meetings. Now I feel that lack of a sense of community in the group early on negated any serious discussion of group goals and objectives. At that time there was very little sense of identity with the YOC. They really didn't care about goals and objectives. They cared only about how they fit into and were accepted in the group.

My final comment on this stage is that the adults filling out the survey were much kinder to me in the evaluations than were the youth. Either the youth are more idealistic and/or honest or their expectations of leadership from me were different than those of the adults involved. This is another matter I will have to continue to wrestle with.

The months of October and November moved by rapidly for our YOC. It was a time of team building when we used bake sales and a slave day to mold the group into a working unit with some few common causes. The primary cause was to plan and participate in a retreat at Holiday Hills, New York, the very end of January. We also used a progressive supper and a Halloween Party as functions to open the door to new members and create a cohesiveness amongst those who already belonged.

As we looked toward December and beyond to the January retreat, the officers joined me in feeling the need for further direction from the members. How would they evaluate the year thus far? What had been the highlights and the weak points? How well had the sponsors and officers functioned? What had been their purpose in the past and what were their expectations for the future? How could the group be strengthened and what was the best approach to the January retreat? Obviously the officers and I were looking for a word of affirmation and/or some specific guidance for correcting past mistakes and improving future programs and plans. Our feeling was that if a sense of community within YOC was our goal we needed to have direct input from the participants in order to accomplish that goal. We needed to have greater insight into which things had met needs and created community and which things had failed. Following is a summary of the response we received to our specific questions:

1. In my opinion the purpose of a YOC is to get to know each other better and to grow together as a group and as individual Christians\*

2. When our group started last August, I felt both hopefulness and that we had a good thing going.
3. The best thing about our group has been the fellowship and the money raising for the retreats.
4. The worse thing about our group is the lack of concern for others.
5. Our YOC sponsors are doing a good job.
6. I feel our elected officer are doing the best they can.
7. If I were President of the group I would demand more attention.
8. I feel we need to put more emphasis on relationships with others.
9. I hope in the future that we can grow closer together.
10. The three things that hurt our group most are:
  - a. A few immature fellas.
  - b. Apathy of the group.
  - c. Lack of spiritual content
11. The three things that help our group most are:
  - a. Fellowship.
  - b. The sponsors.
  - c. Our president.
12. As we plan for our retreat in January I hope that we will be looking for a spiritual experience rather than just fun and games.
13. I feel the best way to strengthen our YOC is to talk things over more.
14. I would like the following topics discussed in our YOC:
  - a. Relations with God and others.
  - b. Being a Christian.
  - c. The Bible.

\*The underlined portion represents the primary answer(s)

This information from Enclosure No, 2 of this project proved extremely revealing. Due to a very heavy emphasis on human relations and group growth and cohesiveness, it suddenly became apparent that the YOC had very little concern with content and/or subject matter. What they were primarily concerned with was how they were being treated by others and whether others seemed to be accepting and/or rejecting them. Even when they were asked to list topics for discussion for the future, the first one listed had to do with relationships.

Ever since my seminary days I have had the conviction that the Biblical message of love has little meaning to the reader of the Bible until that reader first experienced love first hand and then is able to relate the biblical message to his/her experience. Repeatedly my conviction was confirmed within the context of our YOC meetings. Certain members volunteered to share the Gospel with our group but these same individuals seemed to lack genuine love for the very group member they asked to witness to. Without exception the teenagers seemed to recognize this and would reject the message from these individuals. On the other hand, a few YOC members proved to be open and warm towards most of the YOC group. When it came time for them to lead in worship or discussion they were well received and listened to. Because their lives were consistent and authentic they had a high degree of credibility with their peers, just as Jesus had had in his life time. Yes, our teenagers look beyond words and search for greater depth in the lives of those around them.

STAGE VI - CHRISTMAS CAROLING AND FORGIVENESS

Dec 17, 1975 and

Jan 4, 1976

Many of our YOC families were planning on traveling over Christmas so our last session before Christmas was a Caroling Party at Fort Wadsworth followed by a Chili/Hot Chocolate supper in front of the fireplace at the Hosutt's. It was a bitter cold night but the group was extremely enthusiastic and a great time was had by all. The supper party at my home was great fun and the youth made themselves comfortable and played parlor games while listening to their favorite records. At approximately eleven o'clock the last of the youth had departed and only two other adult couples remained in my home. Suddenly one of the senior boys returned to the door and asked to see me privately. He was visibly upset and I immediately took him to my office. With little hesitation he made his confession. His girl friend, a high school junior and YOC member, had talked him into buying her some wine. She had finished off the pint of wine at a girl friend's house and arrived at my house to join him for the party. Four feet from my door she had vomitted, and although most of the YOC had not witnessed this, he had. Now he had come to apologize for his buying the wine and her drinking it and getting sick in my front yard. He was leaving with his family for Texas the next morning at six o'clock and he wanted to "set the record straight" before he left. I assured him that the Biblical example was to forgive those who were truly repentant and that, as far as I was concerned, he had demonstrated a sincere concern over his act of poor judgement. I further expressed my interest in his girl friend's welfare and indicated a concern for her. He replied that she would be gone until January 4th

but that he would write her over the holidays and tell her that he had talked with me.

I must confess that when we assembled for YOC on January 4, 1976 this incident had escaped my memory. I opened the meeting in prayer that night and was about to turn the group over to the YOC President when the girl in the story above asked to address the group. With tears streaming down her thin cheeks she told the YOC of her wine-drinking adventure the night of our Christmas caroling party. Then she went on to ask the group if they would forgive her for her silly mistake. For several long seconds she stood before the group and wept. Finally, I moved to her side, put my arm around her, and assured her that God forgave her. I suggested that Jesus once taught that only those who are sinless can really cast stones and that I doubted if any of us assembled there that night were truly sinless. Soon her best friend stepped forward and embraced her. Several others quickly followed her example. And for one exciting, breath-taking moment our YOC was caught up in a spirit of forgiving love. For at least that moment we tasted a sense of community that those in the early days of Christianity must have known. "Koinonia". I muttered outloud, "this has got to be Koinonia."

None of us will ever know the impact of our moment of Koinonia on January 4th, but I for one believe it was a turning point for at least a handful of us. Many at the meeting that night only giggled the experience away. For the "outsider" it truly must have been a silly scene. But for those of us intimately involved in it, it meant a deepened relationship from then on. We had shared tears together and the ties that now bound us together were deep and firm.

The bulk of January was spent in planning our first retreat. We sponsors had a potluck supper together so that we could get to know one another better and agree upon our role at the retreat. Our YOC was to join with the YOC of a neighboring Army Installation at the retreat so we organized a joint meeting with that YOC group. The results of that joint meeting were very fascinating, but hardly surprising. It seemed to cause the members of our YOC to draw closer together as they entered into contact with the other group of teenagers. A few of our group were genuinely open to the members of the other group, but the majority of our youngsters withdrew to the security of their own group members. Just when our youth were making progress within their own group, we had tasked them with joining in with a strange new group. In evaluation forms following this joint meeting and the retreat, (Enclosure No. 3) many youth felt that genuine fellowship was never established and that programs were slowed down by low trust levels. It was also concluded that until a local group has established a strong fellowship itself it is very difficult for two groups to effectively communicate and fellowship together. The Retreat Evaluations further indicated that most of the youth (32 of 35) responded favorably to the retreat. Outdoor activities and fellowship were the things they enjoyed most about the weekend. After "lousy food", the worse things about the retreat listed were lack of communication between people

and lack of spiritual content. Thinking in terms of the future, the retreatants singled out the need for greater participation and more discussion. The themes they were most interested in pursuing were Christian Fellowship and Friends.

Perhaps it is important to mention a little bit about discipline at this point. Youth, as a result of peer pressure, will do most anything that will get them attention. This extends from being loud, to smoking cigarettes, to getting involved in sexual activities. On the other hand, I am convinced that these same teenagers want and need to have restrictions placed before them and enforced. In anticipation of the retreat we sponsors agreed upon certain controlled measures for the conduct of the Retreat. In two instances our rules or control measures (Enclosure No. 4) were broken and I kept my word and informed the parents of the violators when we returned to Fort Wadsworth. The young people responded to the discipline by admitting their fault and apologizing. In reflection I feel that we may have been too lenient in our discipline.

Once again the message was coming through that youth are vitally concerned about their own identity in relationship with others and that subject matter is of little consequence at a YOC meeting until relationships are secure. Perhaps a clear illustration of this is the use we made of volley ball. Its importance was that it provided the young people with a place to meet, be together, and eventually get to know one another. The game served as an excuse for them to gather, and out of their desperate need to be a part of and to be recognized, many YOC pretended to be interested in volley ball in order to belong.



Our officers had programmed up through the retreat in late January but not beyond it. At a meeting of officers during the retreat it was agreed upon that the first meeting in February would be used as a programming session for the period between then and our next retreat, which was scheduled at West Point, New York for the period 30 April - 2 May 1976. During our discussion of the anticipated 7 February meeting, one of the officers suggested it would be a "second try" for our group. When questioned, he indicated that he felt it would be a fresh start as we looked toward meeting the needs of the group as we now understood them after five months of history at a YOC. I personally felt it was a keen insight on his part.

When 7 February rolled around I was not terribly surprised to see the themes the youth selected for future programs. (Enclosure No. 5). In a real sense they were familiar themes:

- Relations to others
- Friends or Acquaintances
- Trust
- Rejection

Once again the emphasis focused on their interest and concern over interpersonal relationship. Who am I? What do others think of me? How can I be accepted and recognized by others without conforming my standards and convictions? Why is life so complicated? Why don't certain people act the way they are supposed to as Christian young people? Why don't I often do as I know I should? Yes, the search for individual identity in relationship to others continued to be the predominant theme in our YOC.

The second key issue that was raised at the 7 February meeting dealt with sponsor participation in the future YOC Programs. Past months had revealed

that our YOC officers were really not confident in their leadership roles despite the bi-monthly meeting we sponsors had with them. In planning the January Retreat the officers had pleaded with the sponsors not to commit them to any key leadership roles during the retreat. Now, as we looked toward the ensuing weeks, the officers continued their pleas for more intervention on the part of sponsors. They wanted leadership roles, but once they were given these roles they floundered about in their demonstration of leadership. This comment does not apply universally for there were two significant exceptions. Further, I understand that this is but one group of young people - a single sampling. Yet, I feel secure in making the observation that youth are extremely ambivalent about leadership roles and that, with a few exceptions, most teenagers are reluctant and/or too inexperienced to effectively lead a large group in a group experience. On the other hand, the beauty of YOC is that it does afford young people with their first experience at leadership roles within the Church. Their obvious potential is stimulating, exciting and tends to fill this chaplain with hope for the future. Scripturally, I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 1:6-9 at this point. To be allowed to provide opportunity to young people to "plant" their roots in the Church and to have those roots "watered" by more experienced Christians along the way means that the God of our fathers and our God, will give growth. This is indeed, a hopeful experience.

The outcome of our 7 February meeting was a reorganization of our YOC from a standard structure with the key offices of President, Vice President, etc. to an organization of four groups of approximately twelve (12) members with each group having a former officer in it as well as an assigned adult

sponsor to render instant resource input and guidance. This structure turned out to be much more "successful" as it provided for a greater sharing of leadership responsibilities. Also, the size of each group proved much more manageable to the youth leaders involved. Each group was required to provide one program a month thus allowing for significant planning time for each group. I feel this adjustment in organization demonstrated good health in our YOC. The group was able to recognize problem areas, move from the problems to recommendations, and finally implement the necessary changes. Increased cohesiveness and fellowship in the YOC following the 7 February meeting proved that we were on the right track.

#### STAGE IX GROWTH AND GETTING READY TO SAY GOODBYE

February thru May 1976

The period from 7 February through the end of our second retreat at West Point, New York, on 2 May, was a time of gradual but positive growth. Walls of hostility and misunderstanding began to crumble and increased cohesiveness and fellowship was experienced by many of us. Indicative of this period was a session we had on February 22nd entitled Friends or Acquaintances. Four of the group members presented the program and made a clear distinction between Strangers, Acquaintances, Friends, Close Friends, and Christian Friends. Definitions were offered as follows:

Strangers - people who simply enter into one another's presence.

Acquaintances - people who chat briefly and may enjoy one another's company.

Friends - people who share feelings and ideas.

Close Friends - people who share deep feelings and ideas and want to help one another.

Christian Friends - people who trust one another and share an honesty because their lives have been joined by Christian living.

This very moving program continued with a discussion of ways in which friendship could be demonstrated. Passages from Holy Scriptures and Robert Raines book, Creative Brooding, were then shared with the group. A tape of Like the Bridge Over Troubled Waters concluded the program. Perhaps it was my own wish fulfillment, but it did seem to me that reconciliation took place that night between certain members of the group. Quite by accident. I found myself standing next to the young man who had been most disruptive to the group all year long. He had not been a serious problem, but because of his unlimited potential as a leader, several of us had been concerned over our inability to help him function constructively in the group. As our program closed, I witnessed him reaching out his hand to the program leader for the evening and saying, "Hi, Christian Friend". A little thing to be sure, but I had known for weeks that serious friction had existed between he and the girl he greeted, and I took the liberty of interpreting this as a moment of reconciliation. In the spirit of our Christian Faith and in the fellowship of our little corner of Christ's Body, two young people had joined hands in a new response toward one another. Something, rather Someone, greater than each of them had united them in community. Now I can joyfully report that the young man involved maintained a changed attitude toward his participation in the YOC from that evening on.

Our second retreat at West Point, New York, was to be more of a mass rally than it was to be an intimate, sharing Retreat. Over five hundred (500) teenagers from six Army Installations were to gather together for a full week-end of worship, recreation and fellowship. Therefore, my concern here is to simply report on how our YOC responded to this second retreat and not attempt to describe the total retreat as such.

When I first mentioned to our Ft. Wadsworth YOC that they had been invited to a retreat with over four hundred other teenagers, they were most excited. However, at second thought, they demanded to know the sleeping arrangement. Would they be allowed to stay together? If not, they would refuse to go. After all, they did not want to get stuck with a bunch of weird teenagers from some other post. And so, the thought of the large gathering tended to mold our people together. In view of the impending rally at West Point, any Fort Wadsworth kid was ten times better than some strange person from Fort Dix, N.J. or Carlisle Barracks, Pa. Such circumstances made each of them acceptable to one another, at least for the time being.

One group was an exception to all of this, our close neighbors from Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn. Our first retreat in January had been a joint retreat with the; and although they had seemed like a strange bunch to our youth at our first retreat, I suddenly began to hear favorable things about many of their membership. "Boy, will it be great to see Susie again" "That Robert's boy is really cute". "I sure think those Hamilton kids are cool." If our YOC group could not stay together, then the Hamilton kids would be fine to stay with. Just as long as they could stay away from those "weird" ones from those other Army Posts.

What actually happened at West Point was quite predictable. Our youth and the Fort Hamilton youth tied in very closely together. They had the common history of the January Retreat; and as they joined together and reflected upon it, it seemed to have been some fantastic retreat. While they had been at the January Retreat, it had rated but average. Now the recollection was that it had been one of the very best ever.

Another dynamic emerged at the West Point Retreat that I had not really anticipated. The final day of the retreat was to be May 2nd and many of the youth from Fort Hamilton and Fort Wadsworth would be leaving with their families for new assignments by mid-June. Suddenly the YOC members from our two Posts realized that the last day of the retreat meant goodbye, not only for the retreat, but perhaps forever. And so, as early as May 2nd our youth started the lonely, depressing, frightening experience of saying goodbye, that would continue for many of them through June. And what made it doubly difficult is that most of them had gone through this painful process numerous time before in their young lives. Saying hello and goodbye would become the predominate theme at YOC from the last day of the West Point Retreat through our final meeting on June 20th.

On Sunday, 16 May one of our most popular YOC members announced that she and her family would be leaving for Germany well in advance of the other departing families at Fort Wadsworth. Because of her great popularity and due to our YOC members' previous separation from familiar homes and schools, the news hit like a bombshell. Immediately, it seemed obvious that our next session, the last one for our very popular YOC member, should be geared toward helping the total group to deal with the theme of saying hello and goodbye. We would encounter head on this whole experience of the anxiety and separation that accompanies families as they move from one place to the next. With the assistance of two of the YOC members I came up with three questions that seemed central to the whole experience. We would ask the members of the group to answer how they felt when they said hello and goodbye and what they would want people to say to them if they were leaving. Following is a summary of the questions and the response to them:

Question: How do you feel when you say hello?

Answers: Shy  
Out of place and awkward  
Scared  
Uncertain about how people will take me  
Anxious about what's going to happen.

Question: How do you feel when you say goodbye?

Answers: Depressed about having to say goodbye again  
Lonely  
Sorry that I may not see the other person again  
Sad to have to do it again.

Question: What would you want people to say to you - if you were leaving?

Answers: Give me your address so we can keep in touch.  
Be sure to write often  
Remember the time when - - - - -  
I'm going to miss your crazy face  
Let's trade pictures  
Maybe we can get together again soon.

The Bible is full of stories about people coming and going. God called Abraham out of a familiar country to go to a new land. The Jews wondered in the wilderness for many years. in search of the "Promised Land". and Jesus moved short distances from place to place in his few years of ministry. Surely these Biblical personalities must have experienced the same emotions at saying hello and goodbye that our YOC members did. The need must have been there to be accepted and recognized as one of dignity and worth. The uncertainty of the future home. even a promised land. must have brought anxiety and fear to even the bravest of the Jews. But as they fell back on their common history. the history of their fathers in relationship to God. so it was suggested to our YOC members that they had a history to fall back upon. The faith that kept the Jews moving in the wilderness was the common faith that our YOC proclaimed. The life style that Jesus advocated to the disciples

was the life style that he now challenged us with. The hope of a people united with God, was the hope that some of the group expressed when loneliness set in and the saying goodbye got toughest. Yes, we talked of all these things at YOC that night, and one thing more. All year long we had granted special membership to an older young man from Staten Island. This young man, then twenty years old, had spent years on the "street" into drugs, sex, and alcohol. He had finally graduated from high-school and by a strange set of circumstances had been invited to visit YOC the year before. The night of our hello and goodbye program, he gave what was to be his longest comment of the year. He suggested that, even though YOC folks came and went he had experienced in their fellowship a dimension of love that was something he had never experienced before in his life. He said that YOC seemed to go beyond Fort Wadsworth and that the style of fellowship that Christian youth had with one another was something that could not be taken from them no matter how far they traveled. Then he went on to suggest that kids come and go but the spirit of YOC stayed the same. It was beautiful! Written words do not do justice to the emotion and stimulation that surrounded this young man's little testimony. His English was poor, his sentences ragged, but the truth of his insights was penetrating. This very unexpected spokesman zeroed in on the topic of relationships and community. He lifted out those eternal dimensions to life and living that I can joyously report he first learned of in a little corner of Christ's Body known as the Fort Wadsworth YOC. It was he more than any other who suggested that Christian teenagers can say hello and goodbye hopefully and joyously.



## STAGE X - A FINAL EVALUATION AND MORE GOODBYES

For our next to last meeting I prepared a final evaluation form for the group to fill out (Enclosure No. 6). My primary purpose for this questionnaire was to allow the thirty eight (38) YOC members attending that night to respond to the final question regarding the sense of community that existed in the group. I was curious to find out if the members felt there had been an increase in sense of community in YOC over the year and why or why not. Their answer would be critical to my entire project. If they indicated an increase in sense of community then I felt I could safely conclude that certain dynamics and circumstances had existed throughout the year to allow for this increase. If, on the other hand, the teenagers had not experienced an increase in sense of community, I would know that the right dynamics and circumstances had not existed. I was also interested in clarifying what they felt the purpose of YOC was, whether or not there should be more social or religious activities during the year, and what had been the most negative and positive factors impacting on them as members of the group. The remainder of the questions were important, but the items listed above were central to my arriving at conclusions and recommendations from the project.

The questionnaire revealed that twenty-eight (28) out of thirty-eight (38) youth attended our Sunday evening YOC on a regular basis. No one filling out the form indicated that he/she attended only the retreats because they were not at the meeting. The truth is that for both retreats the numbers swelled by at least six (6) or eight (8). The increase represented five (5) youth from the Roman Catholic Congregation and a few "strap hangers", those who could not quite make up their minds if they wanted to participate or not.

Twenty-two (22) youth indicated that they attended YOC to learn of God while sixteen (16) said they had come for fun. My personal impression is that those who listed fun were the more honest ones and that some of the others were answering based upon expectations of them. None listed parents or peer pressure as a reason for attending and I personally found that rather surprising.

Twenty-eight (28) members of the YOC indicated that YOC was somewhat important in their lives while only six (6) said it was very important. Ten (10) suggested it was of very little importance. All of them had attended the retreats and admitted that YOC helped them to stay close to their friends. Only one of the thirty-eight (38) said that their best friends were not in YOC. Also, thirty (30) of thirty-eight (38) indicated that fellowship with others and getting to know others better were the best parts about the retreats. Only fifty percent of the youth felt YOC helped them to stay close to their parents.

When asked about the worse thing in YOC most refused to answer. Twelve (12) mentioned poor organization and participation but it was obvious that the youth had a difficult time assessing and/or expressing their negative feelings. On the other hand, over two thirds of the group said that making friends and having fellowship with others had been the most helpful thing about YOC. In connection with this answer, thirty-two (32) identified sharing with others to grow in the knowledge of God as the purpose of YOC.

To clarify in my own mind where the youth were placing their priorities. I asked whether there should be more social or religious activities in YOC. The result was that they were split right down the middle on this issue. Fifty percent desired more social activities centered on fellowship and the other half of the group wanted more study and consideration of God.

The critical question in my preparation of the questionnaire was the final one. Thirty-four (34) of the thirty-eight (38) felt that there was a greater sense of community at the end of the year as compared with early in the year. A sampling of their reasoning is as follows:

I feel that we came to respect and befriend each other.

Yes, because we have gone through the same experiences and grown closer together.

Yes, because we have all gotten to know each other better.

Yes, I think it was because we finally started becoming comfortable with each other.

I think people were more open with each other.

I believe there was because when people leave they feel a need to get closer to other people and in YOC you can do that.

Yes, because we all knew we were leaving.

Yes, because people knew each other better and could cooperate with each other better to create a community.

All of these results are extremely important and will be carried beyond this reporting of them in the insights gained/lessons learned section of this project.

Our final meeting of YOC on 20 June started with a baseball game between the boys and the girls. It was a spectacular day and the game was followed by a cook-out and an outdoor worship service. For many of us it was our last time together, and with no real group future to look forward to there was a high level of openness and nostalgia. As each of us in turn said "goodbye" to the group at the close of the meeting, we focused on our common history. Confessions came easy, as did forgiveness, and it was obvious that our sense of community was exceptionally high at that moment. Soon laughter, much of it nervous, turned to tears and sobs. Contracts were made

to "keep in touch" and last minute addresses were exchanged.

I was to see some of the young people in the ensuing weeks and their memory of our group was generally positive. In recollection the group had been a "super" one and their memory of fellow YOC members was normally a positive one. When, on occasion, I tried to balance their opinion of how it had been, they seemed a bit surprised that I, the sponsor, would be so pessimistic. "Next years group will never be like the one we just had", one young friend said very emotionally. For him, as for most of them, the pain and turmoil of the year had been forgotten.

Thus concludes my reporting of the history of our YOC in a ten stage format. Other critical experiences occurred but this report lifts out the pivotal moments in the life of our group and shares the findings of group evaluations, planning sessions, and questionnaires. I now move on with great anticipation to my final chapter in this project entitled Insights Gained/Lessons Learned for Youth Ministry in the Army. Obviously all materials in the following pages will be based upon specific information and insights gained from the preceding pages.

# GUIDE FOR CONTINUING GROWTH

Enclosure No. 1

## Evaluation I Chuck Hosutt - November 1975\*

The church and its people have a right to expect that the chaplain's life and work will be of high quality, evidence commitments to Christ, and serve human needs, his own and others. Evaluation of these characteristics for chaplain and people is not easy without an adequate form. Those evaluation forms is an attempt to honestly look at Chuck Hosutt as a person and as a chaplain. Please express your honest feelings and opinions, for only in that way can he continue to grow and can we develop a better working relationship.

### AS A PERSON

#### 1. Rate Chuck by checking the appropriate place between the extremes listed

- |   |       |       |       |       |       |  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| a. Down-to earth.<br>Approachable.<br>accessible  | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Upfront,<br>detached<br>unaccessible           |
| b. Open, honest.<br>candid                        | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Closed, deceptive<br>suspicious                |
| c. Knows & accepts<br>people for what<br>they are | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Lacks sympathy.<br>is impatient<br>with others |
| d. Really cares<br>about people                   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Could care<br>less                             |
| e. Really listens<br>to people                    | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Can't "hear"<br>what's expressed               |
| f. Will listen<br>to criticism                    | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Closed-<br>minded                              |
| g. Self-confident<br>strong character             | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Uptight, wishy washy.<br>eager to please       |

#### 2. Rate Chuck's spiritual integrity as you experience it

- |   |       |       |       |       |       |              |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| a. Tries to live<br>what he preaches            | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Hypocritical |
| b. Seems to have<br>"inner" spirit-<br>ual life | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Is "empty"   |

\*Filled out by three adults and five youth officers

- c. Shares inner personal and spiritual concerns ———— Keeps personal and spiritual concerns mostly to himself
- d. Seems comfortable with role as pastor ———— Seems uncomfortable struggle with role
3. How would you characterize Chuck's relationship to his family and his roles as husband and father: positive thoughtful strong male loving understanding stable happy family firm but compassionate
4. What do you feel are Church's greatest strengths of personality? What are his greatest weaknesses? listens friendly approachable open don't know out going sense of humor available
5. Rate Chuck as a helping person in these areas: Good Adequate Poor
- a. As an illuminating and interesting teacher ————
- b. As a supportive person and pastor in crisis (death, illness, problem, etc.) ————
- c. Ability to lead others to examine their spiritual life ————
- d. In pastoral counseling and referral ————
- e. In clarifying tasks and training for tasks ————

Additional comments:

#### AS A LEADER

1. Check the description most appropriate to Chuck's leadership style
- Paternalistic: "He makes the decisions because he knows what's best"
- Autocratic: "It is his job to make decisions."
- Democratic: "He allows decision making to be shared."
- Permissive: "We really make the decisions."
2. How well does he cultivate leadership potential in others?
- Very well
- good
- supportive
- available

3. Rate Chuck's relating to others:

Listens to what others are saying	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	It goes in one ear and out the other.
Respects opinions & attitudes of others	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Insists on his own way
Clearly communicates his own view	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Hedges or evades
Manipulates others to get his way	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Plays the role of mediator

4. Check the way or ways in which Chuck deals with conflict:

- He is upset by conflict and does his best to avoid it.
  - Encourages the "creative" use of conflict for growth.
  - Encourages conflict but lets it get out of hand and feelings are hurt.
  - ~~@~~ — Would rather be a mediator than participant in conflict situations.
5. What is the Christian dimension to Chuck's leadership?

Very little  
Presents Christianity as exciting and joyful  
Relates Christianity to life  
Deep commitment to Christ and fellowmen

AS AN ENABLER OF CHANGE

1. Check the way or ways Chuck views change in the life of the Youth of the Chapel:

- Resists change at all costs.
- Will change, but grudgingly.
- Seems to encourage change, but just for the sake of change.
- Seems to encourage changes that respond to needs and are planned.
- Seems more open to change than rest of YOC.
- Seems less open to change than rest of YOC.

Willing to change, but "steps on too many toes" in doing it.

2. Our YOC (    does) (    does not) have clearly defined goals and objectives. How are they set?    No goals set or discussed  
Too many cliques & too much goofing  
Goals not being reached  
By YOC with help of counselors  
Set as group perceives them?
3. Chuck (    does) (    does not) have the ability to cooperate with others in the YOC program.
4. Chuck (    does) (    does not) have the ability to help others to clarify their own convictions and values.
5. Chuck (    does) (    does not) have the ability to involve the YOC through community service, social activities and chapel functions.



Where Are We?

FORT WADSWORTH SENIOR YOC

1. In my opinion the purpose of a YOC is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When our groups started last August I felt \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The best thing about our group has been \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The worst thing about our group is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Our YOC sponsors \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. I feel our elected officers \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. If I were President of the group I would \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. I feel we need to put more emphasis on \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. I hope in the future that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. The three things that hurt our group most are \_\_\_\_\_  
a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_

11. The three things that help our group most are:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

12. As we plan for our retreat in January I hope that \_\_\_\_\_

13. I feel the best way to strengthen our YOC is to \_\_\_\_\_

14. I would like the following topics discussed in our YOC: (a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE RETREAT?

1. I felt the retreat was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The part I liked best was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The part I thought was the weakest was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. I thought the films were \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. I feel that in the future \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. I feel that the overall YOC programs provided in the Army is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. I would be interested in attending some religious programs discussing the following topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. I would like to talk further with a chaplain about \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## AFTER ACTION REPORT - YOC RETREAT

## PLANNING

The Junior and Senior YOC Groups of Forts Wadsworth and Hamilton participated in a joint retreat at Holiday Hills YMCA Camp in Pawling, New York during the period 23-25 January. One hundred and thirteen (113) youth and sixteen (16) sponsors participated. A joint planning session was held on 6 December for sponsors and youth leaders of all four groups. A potluck supper meeting was held for all sponsors on 9 January. Although these sessions were helpful, they were held too late. Recommend planning begin next year as early as October with the first meeting of sponsors and youth leaders as early as the first week in November. Input from the youth leaders on programming was weak this year and perhaps an earlier start would allow them a better opportunity to participate.

The Junior and Senior groups from both posts complained that it was hard to get to know the youth from the other post. In evaluation forms many youth felt that genuine fellowship was never established and that programs were slowed down by low trust level. Longer retreats might help this problem area but it is not realistic to believe that longer retreats are possible. Separate retreats might be considered for January with a joint retreat following in the spring. Until a local group has established a strong fellowship itself it is near impossible for two groups to effectively communicate and fellowship together.

## ADMIN DETAILS

Chaplains Linderman and Love negotiated for monies and provided bus transportation. They also determined costs per child. Early information on costs motivated youth at Fort Wadsworth to conduct bake sales and work days to defray their expenses.

An early trip in late fall to the retreat location was extremely helpful. As many of the key sponsors as possible should make this advance trip.

An advance party should definitely be sent out the day of the retreat so as to clarify all arrangements. This year one cottage, previously promised to our group, was found to be under renovation and twenty-three girls had to be relocated immediately upon our arrival. This was awkward to say the least.

Finally, an attempt should be made to depart this location earlier so as to arrive at the retreat area before dark and to evade the heavy city traffic as much as possible.

## PROGRAMS

Themes and programs were well planned and the response was very gratifying. Holiday Hills provides excellent recreational opportunities in the realm of hiking, skating, tobogganing, and snowball fighting. The weather was most cooperative and provided several inches of fresh snow. Two excellent rooms with fireplaces made for ideal meeting areas and the auditorium was more than adequate for singing sessions and films. The mess hall facility was outstanding and the food above average.

I feel our own speakers were more than adequate but it would help if themes were more closely related via the use of a common text or a resource document. Increased long range planning should help provide this needed coordination.

The wives complained that they felt unqualified to lead discussion groups. By in large they did a good job but it is true that they have no training with small groups. Selection of the right sponsors is critical and this concern of the women should not be overlooked next year.

It was obvious the first night that we did not allow enough time for the youth to settle in their rooms and explore the area. Coupled with this, we attempted too much of a program the first night and did not provide an opportunity for the group to eat their sack lunches together. In retrospect we feel this was a mistake.

The films selected, The More We Get Together and The Conversion of Col Bottomly were well received. Leaders need to program several hours of film previewing in order to be able to provide films that fit appropriately into the overall program.

Finally, the Talent Night was a flop and should have been prenoted for several weeks prior to the retreat.

## DISCIPLINE

We successfully anticipated the problem areas of smoking and drinking well in advance and at the potluck supper in early January, all the sponsors agreed on the following measures:

1. Written permission from parents was required for smokers.
2. Absolutely no drinking would be allowed.
3. Violators would have their parents called to come and pick them up at the retreat center.

Room visitation was allowed up until 12:30 AM each night between boys and girls but it was carried on beyond 12:30 AM the first night. It was also announced that lights would be on and doors would be open during all visitation. This practice was violated the second night and one couple was appropriately disciplined by being confronted, and upon return to Fort Wadsworth, reported to their parents. We sponsors now feel that no visitation in rooms should be allowed at the retreat location.

Youth were required to attend all meals. This was required for health reasons and to keep people informed of all activities.

A curfew was set for 12:30 AM after which time all were required to be in their rooms. Lights and radios were required off by 1:30 AM. In retrospect most sponsors now feel these hours were too late and that both curfew and lights/radio off should take place no later than midnight.

Great care should be taken to brief the youth on discipline both before the retreat and immediately upon arrival in the retreat area. The initial orientation should include a discussion of responsibilities that participants have for themselves and for one another.

#### THE AGE-OLD PROBLEM - "Strap Hangers"

We had those who joined the YOC just to attend the retreat. Most of them were non-participant types - they were along for a good time. Others, hopefully, were helped. We still feel they are worth the risk and provide an evangelistic opportunity.

## A SECOND TRY

7 February 1976

8 February 1976

Sponsors Night

Brian Donley

15      "

Relating to Others

Group No. 1

22      "

Friends or Acquaintances

Group No. 2

29      "

Racism

Group No. 3

7 March 1976

Film: Teenagers Talk  
Getting Through Adolescence

Group No. 1

14      "

Sponsors Night

Special Supper

21      "

Trust

Group No. 2

28      "

Radio City Music Hall  
Easter Show

Group No. 3

4 April 1976

Rejection

Group No. 1

11      "

Sponsors Night

18      "

The Second Coming of Christ

Group No. 2

25      "

Prepare for Retreat No. 2  
at West Point. New York

Group No. 3

30 April - 2 May 1976 Retreat at West Point. New York

FINAL YOUTH OF THE CHAPEL (YOC) QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How often did you attend YOC meeting?
  - (a) Once a week
  - (b) Once a month
  - (c) Once every two weeks
  - (d) Only for retreats
2. Why did you attend YOC?
  - (a) Parents pressure
  - (b) It was fun
  - (c) Peer pressure
  - (d) To learn of God
3. What was the importance of YOC in your life?
  - (a) Very important
  - (b) Of very little importance
  - (c) Somewhat important
  - (d) Of no importance
4. Did you attend the religious retreats? Yes No
5. What was the best part about the retreats?
6. Did YOC help you to stay close to God? Yes No
7. Did YOC help you to stay close to your parents? Yes No
8. Did YOC help you to stay close to your friends Yes No
9. What has been the worse thing about our YOC this year?
10. What has been the most helpful thing to you in YOC this year?
11. Should there have been more social or religious activities in YOC this year? (Social) (Religious)  
Why?
12. Are your closest friends at Ft Wadsworth members of YOC? Yes No
13. In your opinion what is the purpose of YOC?
14. Was there more of a sense of community in YOC at the end of the year as compared with the beginning of the year? Why or why not?



V. LESSONS LEARNED AND INSIGHTS GAINED  
FOR FUTURE YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

This project has caused me to want to "clear the air" on certain conceptions I have pertaining to a ministry with youth. Some of the following observations are neither new to me or with me, but they have been put into sharper focus as a result of this project. I have chosen to mention them primarily to orient myself to the task of evaluating whether or not I discovered any new insights into how one creates a sense of community amongst teenagers involved in an Army Chapel in a military environment.

What have been some of the values of our YOC? Are there any weaknesses and/or dangers in having a YOC? How do these values and/or dangers affect the attempt to create a sense of community in a YOC in an Army Chapel?

First, I feel that the YOC offers a valid way for young people to learn the content and relevance of the Christian religion. What person, having struggled to articulate a belief in a way that others could understand, has not found himself/herself with a firm grasp on the reality of that belief? Who, having met opposition in a small group discussion, has not been grateful for the necessity to sharpen and clarify an idea? Who, having been stimulated and challenged by the shared insight of another person, (peer education), has not seen a whole new world open up before him/her? And as the gained information of the content and relevance of the Christian faith is learned and shared amongst the members of the YOC, a sense of community is in fact created.

Very closely following that observation is a second one. I am convinced more than ever, that truth is communicated through persons, through

what they are and how they act, as well as through words and ideas. People not only learn facts --- they have the potential for change. Because that is true the YOC can, and in a few instances did, become a channel for God's work of redemption. And when that takes place it is a powerful instrument for creating the ideal sense of community for those involved - koinonia, that fellowship which truly allows young and old alike to become the people that God intended them to be.

Thirdly, and ideally, the YOC has the potential of sustaining an individual so that the individual no longer faces the world alone. Potentially, a new way of life is created and rooted in a fellowship which upholds that way. Obviously, this kind of thing can and does become a reality only through persons who know their dependence on God and their responsibility before Him.

On the other hand, one of the real dangers regarding a YOC is to assume that membership in it will automatically produce changed young people. In our YOC it was obvious that many of our members were not reached to any great degree, nor were they different youth because of their involvement with the YOC. Unfortunately, several went through the entire year without sensing or being a part of a significant community responding to God or being drawn together in Christian fellowship. Neither regular attendance nor a verbal acknowledgement of membership equals a genuine sense of community.

Secondly, there is always the danger that too much emphasis might be placed on the YOC over the individual member. Living in a culture which develops people who desperately need social approval, the YOC may unintentionally become the determining influence on the lives of its members.

If a youth "plays" at being religious and/or Christian in order to secure approval or a sense of belonging, that youth is defeating the whole purpose of what being a member of YOC is all about. It matters a great deal who and what the members of the group are. It matters a great deal that one of the goals of YOC is not to develop "other-directed" people, but people whose lives are directed by their Christian faith and convictions. It matters a great deal that each member of YOC think of himself/herself as a unique person. Indeed, it is because of this --- because youth are persons, a self, only as an individual in community --- that the YOC, or any other Christian group, avoiding the pitfalls and actualizing the potentialities, is here conceived of as an instrument for the fulfilling of God's purpose for youth.

After long searching for a study on youth in any military setting, I finally came across a rather interesting, though incomplete, one prepared by Chaplain (COL) Peter C. Schroder, Jr. of Kessler Air Force Base, Mississippi. Although he concerned himself with young adults in the Air Force schooling system at his base, I found his outline for discussing the ministry there somewhat helpful. He selected the following outline:

- a. Nature and Needs of Young Adults
- b. Chaplain Strategy for Ministry to Young Adults
- c. Program Characteristic for Ministry to Young Adults
- d. Resources for Chaplain Strategy for Ministry to Young Adults
- e. Principles for Ministry With Young Adults

In the ensuing pages I will adapt his outline to my own use and fill out the responses from my own lessons learned and insight gained for youth ministry in the Army. Throughout it is my intention to comment on how I have learned that certain factors and/or dynamics did create a sense of community amongst teenagers in our Army Chapel at Fort Wadsworth during the past year.

## A. NATURE AND NEEDS OF TEENAGERS

1. IDENTITY: During this period of life teenagers are testing skills and abilities which have not been fully tested before. They are interacting with new people, new environments, new friends. It is a period of experimentation. Previous identities become diffused. Various roles and ideologies are tried on for size. The "strong" emerge from this period with an enlarged sense of self, ready to assume the important relationships that go with adulthood. The "weak", particularly in times of profound cultural upheaval, become confused in their identities and either withdraw in isolation or abandon themselves to a mob identity. Those who fail in their search can fall into the clutches of drug abuse, alcohol, marijuana, or worse. The aim of our YOC at this point was to help in the healthy search for identity, to encourage, to support, to show the way by striving to formulate a strong self-image. It was our purpose to help establish persons in relationship with God, persons aware of their selfhood in community with a healthy self-acceptance. Such is the core of our religious mission and the heart of personal identity from this writers perspective.

2. INDEPENDENCE: Teenagers begin to actively assume responsibility for some of the major decisions which previously were left to parents. It is a time of newly discovered independence for sorting out and testing ideas, values, and concepts learned at home, school, church, and clubs. Hopefully, aided by the community of YOC, our teenagers were started on the road of fitting together all of these things in an acceptable, functional pattern. The most serious option to this is a license which leads to escape from responsibility, lack of self-discipline, and lack of respect for the rights of others.

3. INTIMACY: Teenagers yearn for intimacy. They need to draw close to the world and the people in it. They are generally accepting and have an overpowering need to be accepted. They seek new, meaningful friendships and are interested in learning about teamwork and getting along with others. They are beginning to seek out persons of the opposite sex and they are usually open to spiritual relationship. At the same time, obstacles are present that prevent intimacy. These obstacles come in the form of self-seeking friendship, hasty and unprepared marriages, loose sex practices and homosexuality. It was my observation that many in the YOC had a very difficult time determining for themselves where they were "coming from". When they found intimacy they didn't know what to do with it. Something they wanted turned out to be something they did not know how to handle. One of my primary roles was to create an atmosphere of trust and intimacy wherein the youth could experiment and test themselves in relationship to others.

4. INVESTMENT: Teenagers pursue ways to invest their time and talents in meaningful, creative activities. They are in the midst of a most profound state of personality development when not only skills but convictions are being examined and tested. Their very potential is exciting and challenging. They stand ready to make important investments, and if the Church of Jesus Christ does not make a pitch for their investment, that investment will go elsewhere. My personal conviction is that youth ministry is one of our most critical opportunities, due to teenagers willingness to invest themselves.

5. STABILITY: Recent reports suggest very emphatically that in a world characterized by change and mobility, more teenagers are beginning to place a higher priority on stability, structure, easily identified authority, and more clearly defined relationship. Youth, subjected to the Army experience of moving at least once every three years, fall in line with this new attitude and know first hand the painful experience of being the new guy or girl on the block or in the classroom.

#### B. CHAPLAIN STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY TO TEENAGERS (LEADERSHIP)

1. VISIBILITY: I found that the teenagers appreciated having the youth sponsor around. A very positive response was evoked from the youth when the sponsor showed up at sports events, the teen club, and informal gatherings on the street corner. This was particularly true, if, after the first few moments of joking, the sponsor "heard the youth out". The purpose is not to become one of them but to demonstrate insight into their life style. Behind the insight is the demonstration that you really care for and about them. A critical prerequisite for a sense of community in a youth program is the belief that the sponsor really cares about the members of the group.

2. AVAILABILITY: To be visible to a group is one thing. To be available is even more important. Our teenagers this past year seemed to be saying that they wanted sponsors who were approachable, open, flexible, caring, self-confident and genuine. They demanded a role in the decision making process of our group, but they seemed more secure in the knowledge that sponsors were standing by "just in case". Perhaps the key to our approach to creating a sense of community this past year was listening. This listening was done in two ways. First, listening took place on a one-to-one basis. Secondly, it was done in small groups with youth striving

to listen to one another. The purpose in each instance was to develop an environment wherein persons could disagree with one another without rejecting one another and get to the core of difficult problems without feeling that there were certain things they could not talk about together. I have learned that the sponsor must be absolutely shock-proof in his or her listening. It is much too easy to raise eyebrows, point fingers, and judge, thereby driving the youth away. Effective listening does not mean you condone what is being said, but that you are available to share the problem and/or concern and to pursue it with the teenager(s) involved. I am convinced that much of the valuable ministry I had with the youth this past year was carried on outside of the YOC meeting on the street corner, in the gymnasium, at the library, and in the halls of the Chapel.

#### C. PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS FOR MINISTRY TO TEENAGERS

Our teenagers seemed to demand a variety of programs. They were interested in active singing, some Bible study, if it were applied to present day living, lots of social activities, small group discussions, and dynamic guest speakers. Television seems to have taken away some of this generations social skills and an excuse always seemed necessary to promote interaction. Volley Ball games had great value for our YOC, not because it was a favorite sport, but because it provided a reason for the youth to gather together "to be". Bible Study was not really that popular as far as content was concerned, but because it was an excuse for getting together for fellowship. My feeling is that the variety of programs helped in encouraging the greater number of youth to participate more fully in our religious education experiences. By-in-large the programs that had the greatest appeal dealt with inter-personal relationship.

Richard Howard of Defiance College, Ohio, writing in the December-January 1975-76 issue of AD Magazine, confirms my findings when he suggests that youth like three things - fun and games, meaningful service to others, and discussions.

"First of all, kids do want to have a group that they can have fun with. It can't all be dead serious; they do want to horse play. And they want adult leaders who can have fun, too.

Second, many kids really do want to help others like working with the elderly or with children or on work camp trips to oppressed areas, hunger marches, and the like.

Finally, discussions need to deal with the real in their lives - both personal and social. And that doesn't mean you can't get into deep theological discussions, because you simply cannot separate life's problems from what is taught in the Bible,"<sup>4</sup>

Each of these items lifted out by Mr. Howard were instrumental in creating a sense of community in our YOC.

#### D. CHAPLAIN RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY TO TEENAGERS

1. This project has convinced me that THINGS TAKE TIME, especially important things like developing a sense of community amongst teenagers. Teenagers watch and listen before they commit themselves to a person or a group. Their trust level is low until they learn from experience that they can trust. This observation is not uniquely true of our YOC, or even of all youth, but I feel it does have validity. Time is an extremely important resource in youth ministry. Human nature requires time to build trust.

2. Community cannot be programmed for youth. No series of programs, no matter how effective they seem to be, can result in a sense of community until the youth are invited to participate in the programming. A sense of



ownership must be established. The key to community is not primarily organization but the experience of belonging where members touch one another with love, prayer, forgiveness and understanding.

3. A "classroom approach" to creating a sense of community is more difficult than using an informal environment. The more informal approach is much more conducive to one-to-one and small group listening, as described earlier. I found that rotating meetings in the homes of members was very helpful in creating a sense of community.

4. YOC and similar groups allow youth the opportunity of exploring with other youth and adults, their personal worth in terms of vocations, leisure, marriage, and role in society. This opportunity is likely to be fruitful if the procedures involve real problem solving and simulation games. And as youth relate to one another and adults by means of participating in work and worship settings, their sense of community develops and increases. Sharing leads to the establishment of a group history, and the common experience of "remembering" knits people together. Nothing builds community stronger than when people can say to one another, "Do you remember when we did so-and-so together"?

5. An event-oriented approach to teenagers seemed to be much more effective than the traditional classroom approach to learning. Several advantages seem inherent in this approach: the youth are involved in the planning and execution of such events, and they provide substantial opportunities for fellowship. This explains the tremendous popularity of our two weekend retreats. The "event" started with the planning; continued with the bus ride, programs and activities, and still exists today in the memory of those who attended.

6. Group size is critically important for developing a sense of community. Our YOC this year was hampered in its growth due to an active membership that exceeded forty. Even though we broke down into smaller groups as often as seemed appropriate, the trust level of the total group was hampered by limited interaction between all members of the group. I find a YOC of twenty-five members or less a very desirable size.

7. Finally, goal setting proved extremely important. When the YOC was challenged with a goal of making money for our first retreat in January 1976, they quickly mobilized themselves and took action. As I have suggested earlier, youth are prepared to accept a challenge if they understand the purpose behind that challenge.

#### E. PRINCIPLES FOR MINISTRY TO TEACHERS

This project has convinced me that certain principles for ministry to teenagers do exist and these principles are the keys to creating a sense of community amongst teenagers, not only in an Army Chapel but in any Christian Church. For weeks and months, I attempted to summarize my own list of principles only to find that Herman Ahrens, Jr., editor of Youth magazine, had done it much better than I in his article entitled YOUTH in the December-January 1975-76 issue of AD Magazine. The article is entitled What Good Is the Church? And for Army Chaplain purposes the word "chapel" could be inserted for church.

#### WHAT GOOD IS THE CHURCH?

Youth often ask: "What good is the church to me?" And adults ask: "What can we do to hold on to our youth?" The big question is: "Does the church really care enough?" If it does care, then the church is ready to consider the unlimited possibilities of a youth ministry.

The church can be an island of authentic experience for youth today, if we begin to understand, to teach and to live the gospel we profess, the life style Jesus taught us, and the Christian heritage of our past.

The church can be the place--or provide the place--where teens are genuinely heard, where they are respected and accepted as unique human beings, where they are free to be themselves, and where they want to be responsible because they're trusted with responsibility.

The church can be a major conscience, prodding the community when its youth are treated as second-class citizens. The church can urge the community to provide quality and equality in schools. The church can seek justice and opportunities in the ghettos. The church can point to the need for adequate recreational and leisure facilities. The church can speak up for individual rights in juvenile courts and with law enforcement agencies. The church can demonstrate how youth should be heard on issues involving their own lives and futures. The church can help adults to keep from tyrannizing children in their own homes.

The church can be a fellowship where adults and youth bridge the generation gap by building on mutual integrity.

The church and its members--young and old--must be a vital part of society's soul-searching on the crucial issues of our day, above all, what it means to be a human being.

The church can be a supporter for those teens who seek a better way, as well as a refuge for those who fail, so that they may try again and grow.

I honestly see no way in which I can improve on the summary above. It points out the need of the church/chapel to be AUTHENTIC to Christ and our Christian heritage, ACCEPTING of the teenager through listening, SUPPORTIVE of teens who seek a better way, A FELLOWSHIP for youth sharing together and A CONSCIENCE striving to preserve for youth what it means to a human being.

These words, then, summarize how a sense of community can be created amongst a group of teenagers in an Army Chapel and/or in a civilian church. It is possible!

For the Fort Wadsworth YOC a sense of community came very slowly and irregularly, but it came. And I believe, more than ever before, that as people participate in the life of the community of faith, it will become apparent that everyone does not think and feel alike. Youth will have different points of view and different perceptions of the meaning and nature of the Christian faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. Sharing these differences in a genuine spirit of acceptance can lead to deeper and richer perceptions of faith. It can help youth to discover that the real source of community is to keep relating to one another in commitment to God's workings. In such commitment the teaching/learning potential of the community of faith can be enriched and more fully realized.

Many clergy and lay persons in and outside of the Army are hesitant to get involved in a Youth ministry because they really do not know what it is all about. The clearest definition I have found of Youth ministry comes from the pen of Curtis McCormack. I feel this definition speaks for itself and will evoke a response from those who are open to its "call", for you see, dear reader, my intent through-out this project has been to witness to you of the frustration, joy, sorrow and challenge of a ministry to teenagers.

## WHAT IS YOUTH MINISTRY?

Youth ministry means spending time with youth. That does not mean making oneself available for youth but making an effort to be with youth in group situations and individual encounters.

Youth ministry involves interpreting the problems and joys of youth in a Christian perspective. It also means interpreting the adult world to youth and interpreting the youth world to adults. It means interpreting the Christian life-style to individuals who are searching for meaning.

Youth ministry means acquainting youth with Christ and the Bible.

Youth ministry means accepting youth, as persons, with all their hang-ups, and at the same time allowing youth to accept adults with all their hang-ups.

Youth ministry is more than just dealing with the church; it should seek to deal with youth in other life situations as well.

Youth ministry should seek to involve youth and adults together in some common experiences.

Youth ministry is providing an experimental ground for youth to deal with their problems and questions.

6  
----Curtis McCormack

## REFLECTIONS

Several years ago when I was newly assigned as Post Chaplain at West Point, New York, I identified the need for some form of continuing education in my ministry. I suddenly found myself tasked with new leadership roles as Senior Pastor and Supervisory Chaplain in a community of intelligent and dynamic professionals. Under the circumstances I felt the need to increase the level of effectiveness and meaning of my pastoral outreach and to become clearer and more intentional regarding how I would carry out my ministry. Frankly, my new position was a strategic and significant one and I felt compelled to bring to it the fullest gifts of ministry that God had afforded me. Following a short period of searching, I found myself enrolled in a Master of Sacred Theology program at New York Theological Seminary. My present participation in this Doctor of Ministry Project is a natural outgrowth of that earlier involvement.

My continuing education, culminating in this project, has sometimes been painful, but always stimulating, challenging and valuable. The whole process of self assessment has led me to gain current insights into my own growth process. There were times when my energy level ran low and I questioned the value of the additional load put upon me by New York Theological Seminary. Who needs extra work when you are already "full-time" at West Point or the United States Army Chaplain Center and School? I sometimes found it both aggravating and threatening to have to expose myself to small groups when in real life I had already achieved some degree of success. Who needs the risk of exposure to people who

are actually subordinate to you in the system we chaplains know as the Army? What is the sense of spending hours every weekend away from your wife and children to minister to a group of apathetic and unappreciative teenagers? Yes, there were many moments of discomfort along the way. Yet, despite these moments, I can now identify several reasons why my ministry has been enhanced as a result of my continuing education experiences.

First, I feel as if I have a clearer understanding of my abilities and potential for ministry. My continuing education has afforded me the opportunity to realistically assess my strengths and weaknesses as writer, preacher, counselor, and supervisory chaplain. This has been accomplished in an atmosphere wherein questioning and searching were encouraged. It became clearer to me that it was "okay" to be different as long as purpose and meaning supported my position and/or convictions. The possibility of growth through conflict is something that I have a renewed appreciation for as a result of my recent involvement at New York Theological Seminary. I have learned a great deal about my own attitudes toward minorities in our society and of the "history" that has formed these attitudes. Basic as it may seem, I am much more aware of the truth that education is a continuous thing in the lives of each one of us. To grow is to have a student's openness and curiosity throughout our lives.

My continuing education has also helped me to clarify my intentions regarding my ministry. Like many Army chaplains before me, I have often found myself rushing from crisis to crisis putting out fires. With little intentionality or priority to my ministry, I have often been guided

by the nearest need. The demands of my most recent positions in the chaplaincy have required that I prioritize my time and energy as never before. Integration seminars consisting of long hours of dialogue with colleagues have aided me in examining my purpose for ministry. This, in turn, has helped me to be more intentional about my daily work loads and schedule. And an important result is that my own sense of purpose in ministry has hopefully created a sense of well being and stability in the lives of those I am called upon to work with and supervise.

As I come to closure on this project I feel the need to witness to the power of collegialship I have experienced over the past months. Although this is my project, it is very much the result of shared insights and motivation. I am indebted to the lessons learned from a multitude of teenagers who taught me how to be a more effective pastor/youth sponsor. Chaplain Jim Linderman, our local pastor at Fort Wadsworth, has been a real source of encouragement as has Chaplain Ralph Fishburn, Miss Holly Johnson, Miss Cathy Chandler, and Charlie Rakestraw. They constituted my Site Team and as evidenced in the Foreword, made valuable contributions to the Project. Dr. Doris Donnelly was my supportive mentor throughout the past two years and she proved ever willing to listen to my latest proposals.

Those who contributed most to my growth during the past two years were my fellow chaplains. Through hours of frustration, dialogue, confrontation, laughter, coffee, and tears we shared our insights and motivations. Each man deserves a page of tribute for his valuable input to



me personally. In my own way I have attempted to express my appreciation to them. Suffice it to say that the following names evoke deep emotion and vivid memories in my heart and mind:

Al Brough

Max Burgin

Elijah Gardner

Seymour Moskowitz

John Rakestraw

Walt Williams

CHARLES H. MOSUTT, III

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>F.W. Easton, Guidelines for Evaluating Christian Education In The Local Church, United Church Press (Philadelphia, 1973), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>P. M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, Charles Scribner's Sons (New York, 1948), p. 206.

<sup>3</sup>Herman Ahrens, Jr., "YOUTH", A.D. 1975, December 1975-January 1976, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Russell Claussen, "Who Will Listen?", A.D. 1975, December 1975-January 1976, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>Herman Ahrens, Jr., "What Good Is The Church?" A.D. 1975, December 1975-January 1976, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup>Curtis McCormack, "What Is Youth Ministry?" Response, Judson Press (Valley Forge, Pa., 1972), p. 5.

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